1: Jenness--112-115 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 225

"On a normal mid-winter day the Eskimo hunter never stirs till about eight o'clock. His wife rises a little earlier to kindle the lamp, which usually expires during the night. Sometimes she lights it from her bed, but an energetic woman will always rise early and occupy herself with some task or other. Occasionally she boils a little seal-meat to warm up her husband before he goes sealing, but often he is content with frozen fish or deer-meat or cold boiled seal-meat left over from the night before. The woman removes the snow-block from the door, and goes outside to look at the weather, and, it may be, to bring in a fresh supply of blubber for the lamp. Presently children appear, bringing food from other houses, and are sent away with corresponding portions to distribute among the neighbours. Any child, no matter whose it is, may be sent on such errands; and if there are no children, or the wife wants to pay a visit herself, she will take her own contributions of food. A man or two will now probably enter the hut, and the husband, who has eaten his breakfast in bed, turns out and dresses. 'Are they starting out for the sealing-ground yet?' he asks, and if the answer is 'Yes', he hurries forth, harnesses his dogs, and takes his sealing apparatus from the rampart that encompasses the house. With the breaking light all the men set out in a body for the sealing-ground, which may be from three to five miles away. As soon as they reach it they scatter and the dogs sniff about and smell out the holes where the seals come up to the surface of the water to breathe. The hunter watches them, searching about [113]

himself at the same time and probing every suspicious mound. Suddenly a dog begins to scratch in the snow. The hunter hastens to the spot and probes about with his long horn 'feeler' until he finds the exact centre of the hole; then he carefully stamps the snow round the probe and draws it out, leaving only a deep hole about half an inch in diameter. Down this he pushes his indicator, a fine stick of bone or horn about as thick, but as long again, as an ordinary steel knitting needle. At the lower end is a small thin bone disc, and at the top an eyelet to which the short string is fastened that attaches it to another needle, shorter and discless. The indicator rests against the snow at the side of the hole, which keeps it from falling, but the slightest disturbance below will cause it to drop. The second needle is pegged into the snow above so that the indicator can be recovered afterwards. The hunter then places his deerskin or bear-skin foot pad under his feet to keep them from freezing and remains perfectly still, holding the shaft of the harpoon in his right hand and the loop at the end of the line in his left. Every few minutes he stoops to examine his indicator, then straightens up again and scans the horizon around him. A slight quivering of the indicator gives him his cue. He stands with uplifted harpoon on the lee side of the hole -- for the seal has a very quick scent -- and when the indicator suddenly drops he strikes with all his might.

Sometimes a hunter will use another kind of indicator. Instead of the long bone needle with a disc at the end he has a flattened piece of caribou leg-sinew split nearly to the

top. The two ends are then bent round till they lie some two or three inches apart; and each is split again a little to make them grip a wisp of down that is stretched between them, the down being taken indifferently from a duck, a goose or a swan. The sinew is now laid vertically in the hole without reaching to the water, and is held in place by a short needle pushed into the snow above, as with the other form of indicator. The seal, when it blows at the surface, causes the down to flutter up and down, and the hunter strikes as nearly as possible down the centre.

Often the hunter fails to strike his quarry. Sometimes the harpoon just grazes it, sometimes it penetrates but not sufficiently deep to hold the animal fast. But if it does hold a struggle commences, a very grim struggle indeed if the animal is one of the larger rough seals or a bearded seal. The usual method of killing the animal, after it has been dragged to the surface, is by stabbing it in the eye with the sharp handle of the scoop or ladle that is used for enlarging the seal hole. Not everyone can hold on to a large bearded seal, and only a very few can draw one up out of its hole. The hunter must call to his companions for assistance. Many Eskimos have great scars on their hands that testify to the enormous strain of holding a bearded seal on the end of the line, and many a stirring tale is told of the adventures of different hunters. Some have a tragic issue. Ilatsiak had seen a Netsilik Eskimo named Tutiktok whose mitten had dropped off during the struggle, and the line, dragging through his hand, had severed

all his fingers. Another man, Ikpakhuak said, harpooned a bearded seal one autumn on the edge of the ice in Simpson bay. The animal immediately plunged into the water, and dragged the man in with it. From time to time the people saw it rise to the surface, blowing hard, and apparently still having the hunter in tow behind it. (1)

Most of the scars that cover the hunter's hands, however, are gained in a more inglorious manner. A rough seal is dragged home intact by one or more of the dogs, after a small piece of the skin and blubber has been cut off and thrown away as an offering to the other seals. A bearded seal, on the other hand, is cut up beside its hole. A great shout goes up whenever a man spears one of these animals, and all the hunters in the vicinity rush to his assistance. [114] Everyone crowds round as the seal is drawn to the surface in order to obtain a share of the meat. Heedless of the value of the skin, heedless even of each other's hands, they hack away, not infrequently cutting each other as each man in his greed tries to hew off as large a portion as possible. The Rev. Mr. Girling, writing in 1918, said: 'There have been a great number

---

"1. Cf. Stefansson, My Life with the Eskimo, p. 268."

of cases of maiming this winter arising from their ridiculous system of going temporarily mad when they strike an ugyuk (bearded seal) and all stabbing their knives in to get what they can grab; our surgical outfit has been kept busy.' Yet they know that when they return home both the raw meat and a po[redacted] of what is cooked must be distributed amongst the other families, so that all they gain for their exertions is a strip of the skin. Even that is often eaten, so that the only outcome of their folly is a number of severe wounds. (1)

If the day is far spent when he strikes his quarry the hunter usually returns home without waiting for his companions; but if it be still early either he sends his dogs to camp with the seal, (a toggle is passed through the nostril and attached to the trace of the dog), or he drags it around with him until he finds another seal-hole, when the same performance is gone through again. Generally the whole party return together, and are met a little way out by the children, who fall on the seals and pretend to stab them to death, thereby bringing good luck, as they think, to the hunters. The dogs

---

"1. Mr. Stefansson's account (My Life with the Eskimo), p. 269, is not quite accurate, at least not for the Dolphin and Union strait Eskimos."

know their own huts, and each drags its burden to the entrance of the passage, where the housewife is waiting to receive it. The man puts away his sealing-gear, setting his harpoon upright in the snow wall outside the hut, while his wife drags the seal indoors and lays it on its back in the middle of the floor.(2) Sometimes she skins it herself, sometimes a little girl is allowed to skin it, and thus be trained in one of her duties in later life. First a little fresh water is poured into its mouth, for seals, these Eskimos say, have an intense desire for water, and bad luck would attend the hunter who did not administer to their wants.(3) Sometimes small pieces of the blubber are cut from the

---

"2. On Dec. 6, 1914, a Noahognik native speared a large rough seal, the first that was caught that winter. His wife, who was standing at the entrance of her hut when he returned, merely remarked, (kowanna natsemmun, 'Hurrah for the seal'), and went inside the house again. The dogs dragged it into the passage, and she unhitched them and drew it inside the hut. Before skinning it she cut a few small pieces of skin and blubber from its breast and gave each of us one as atit-bit."

"3. I could find no definite belief concerning the rebirth of seals and their gratitude in the new life for the water they received in the old, (such as Mr. Stefansson attributes to the natives of Baillie island and Point Atkinson(Anthrop. Papers, A. M. N. H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 351).) Nor do Copper Eskimos keep the bladder or nose skins, like their neighbours. The catching of seals in nets was unknown to them, as indeed were nets of any kind."

breast and handed round as tit-bits. The bulk of it, however, is stripped off in long slices, and thrown across the board that supports the table, or into the empty space at the back of the lamp. The skin is folded [115] and laid against the wall, and the children are sent out to the various houses with portions of the meat. The husband enters, removes his heavy sealing coat, carefully beats the snow from it with the 'duster', and sits down beside the table to help himself to the steaming food that his wife has just cooked in anticipation of his return. Sometimes, though, if he is very tired, he will undress first and slip into bed, then roll over on to his stomach and eat his supper."

2: Stefansson--50 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 225

"There is but one sealing method in winter. All tribes of the Copper Eskimo, except those Kanhiryuarmiut who live on bears and those Ekalluktogmiut who live on fish, seek level stretches of ice on which to pitch their camps. So far as we know, the Kanhiryuarmiut are the only ones who ever build winter houses on land or even near land, but it is probable that the Ekalluktogmiut do also. These ice encampments are moved from time to time, for the seals within a five-mile radius of any spot are soon exterminated by the hunters. Seals in winter are necessarily non-migratory, as each depends for his supply of air to breathe on the hole in the ice which his own teeth have kept open in spite of the frost."

2: Stefansson--50 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 225

"There is but one sealing method in winter. All tribes of the Copper Eskimo, except those Kanhiryuarmiut who live on bears and those Ekalluktogmiut who live on fish, seek level stretches of ice on which to pitch their camps. So far as we know, the Kanhiryuarmiut are the only ones who ever build winter houses on land or even near land, but it is probable that the Ekalluktogmiut do also. These ice encampments are moved from time to time, for the seals within a five-mile radius of any spot are soon exterminated by the hunters. Seals in winter are necessarily non-migratory, as each depends for his supply of air to breathe on the hole in the ice which his own teeth have kept open in spite of the frost."

2: Stefansson--50-51 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 225

"Of a morning the various hunters start out from camp, usually before daylight, in directions radiating from the encampment. Each is followed by his dogs, one or more, but never over three, for a man who is wealthy enough to own three dogs is sure to have a grown son or a dependent who also goes sealing and needs a dog. The main business of the dog is to find a seal hole; secondarily, he is to drag home the seal if the hunt proves successful. The seal's breathing hole at the upper surface of the ice is but an inch or two in diameter; downwards it widens out, and has thus the shape of an inverted funnel. If it is the home of a female seal about to become a mother the mouth of the hole is enlarged sufficiently to allow the animal to crawl on top the ice and make a cave for herself in the hard snowbank above. But be the [51] seal male or female, be the hole small or large, there is nothing in the appearance of the snow roof above it to indicate its presence to the eye, unless indeed a wandering fox has smelt it out the night before and stopped above it to investigate, leaving its tracks to tell the story. Be a seal hole to windward a dog will smell it at a considerable distance; the finding of it is usually therefore the least of the hunter's troubles."

"When the general locality is discovered the position of the hole is accurately determined by prodding the snow with the caribou antler probe till its point slips into water instead of meeting the hard ice. If the snow roof is thick it is thinned down considerably by scraping away with the snow knife. When so thin that it is not likely to offer much resistance to a lance-thrust, the 'feeler' a slender bone or antler rod, is thrust down through the snow until its lower end is just below the surface of the water. When this is done the hunter cuts himself a block of snow for a seat, spreads a skin rug in front of it to keep his feet from the snow on the ice, and sits down by the hole to wait. The lance lies ready by his side.

The seal must come to the surface frequently to breathe, and the hunter's wait would therefore not prove a long one had the seal but one string to his bow. He has several. In the neighborhood of any seal hole there is a group of several others that have been made by and are used by the same seal. Though the hunter may have done his work so carefully that the seal's suspicions remain unaroused, yet mere chance may prevent for hours and even days his visiting the hole where the captor awaits him. It may happen therefore that the hunter sits from daylight till dark and from daylight to dark again, awaiting the sign of his quarry's approach. If fortune favors, however, the hunter may have his seal in half an hour.

When the seal rises to his hole to breathe his nose pushes upwards the slender 'feeler' that has been so arranged that its upward motion is unimpeded. The hunter rises

from his seat, which was so near that it is not necessary for him to step forward to be in a position to drive his lance vertically downward into the hole; if he needed to make a step forward the crunching of the snow under his foot would warn the animal of danger. When the indicator rod has been elevated as much as it can be, and just as it begins to fall the lance is driven down alongside it, usually striking the seal in its neck or shoulder. The thrust usually goes home; against a good hunter no more than one fluke in ten chances should be recorded.

When the seal has been speared the hole is enlarged with ice pick or knife sufficiently to allow the animal to be hauled out, this after its strength has been partly exhausted by its struggles. As it is about to be hauled out it is despatched by a stab in the head or, occasionally, by a blow on the head with a club. For killing the seal, among the Kanhiryuarmiut at least, a special instrument is used, this is described elsewhere. [52]

If the seal is of the common small kind, the man has little trouble holding him by the stout harpoon line and the hole is soon enlarged with the ice chisel and the animal hauled out on top of the ice. In the case of the gigantic bearded seal, however, the struggle is often severe, the line may break, the harpoon-head pull loose, or the hunter may have to let go. This latter seldom happens, for two reasons: it is considered a great disgrace to let go one's hold, and secondly, the harpoon point, especially if it be of iron,

is an article of great value and must not be lost. A single hunter may get, in this manner, three or four seals in a day, or, he may go a week without getting one."

2: Stefansson--52
116, 225, 231

(1908-1912) 1914

Copper Eskimo

"When a seal has been caught, if the village be not far off, the hunter often sends the dog home dragging the seal by the harness which the hunting dog always wears, while he stays in the hope of getting another; if the village be far off (three to five miles) the seal is not taken home till evening. Some hunters, discounting success, will take along two or even three dogs, sending one dog home each time a seal is caught."

2: Stefanasson--52 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 136, 225

"The method of securing bearded seals is the same essentially as that employed against the common seal, except that two men occasionally join forces, for the animal is huge and powerful and difficult to hold after it is speared. Few bearded seals are secured in winter for they frequent chiefly shore waters, and the seal hunting tribes seldom approach land until towards spring. The stretch of strong current in Dolphin and Union Strait from Lambert Island east to Cape Krusenstern is richer in bearded seals than any other locality accessible to the Copper Eskimo. The ice here is never over two or three inches thick and the seals bask on the ice even in February with the temperature below -40° F. I have here counted over forty bearded seals visible with the naked eye from shore, as many as ten sometimes crawl up through one breathing hole."

2: Stefansson--54 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 225

"In April and early May seals are still the main food of the people and the methods of securing them remain what they were in winter. During this period the Kanhiryuarmiut move from Banks Island to Prince Albert Sound, Victoria Island, and the other tribes divide or move in single bodies towards either the mainland or the Victoria Island shore. The Akuliakattagmiut consider the appearance of the first seal on top of the ice in their locality (about May 20th) as a sign it is time to leave the sea for the fishing lakes. No member of this tribe or of the Haneragmiut, we were told ever tries crawling up to a basking seal in the manner familiar from many other Eskimo districts. Among the Puiplirmiut and Noahonirmiut (in portions of whose hunting districts seals bask on the ice even in winter) about one in three of the able hunters knows this method and uses it more or less. In Coronation Gulf again the method is not much used."

3: Rasmussen--37-38 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo -1-3
116, 784, 225

"No woman may do any sewing on the day her husband catches a seal. Before the seal has been flensed no sewing must be done at all in the house to which it is taken. When it has been flensed women may usually sew in that house on the same day, but the wife of the man who caught it must wait till the next day, unless its head has been boiled, as this exempts her from the taboo.

As long as a seal lies unflensed in a house the rime must not be scraped off the pane of ice that forms the window. Indeed, one must always be careful about rime on ice panes in conjunction with seals; for instance the rime must not fall on the floor at a place where there is the blood of a seal. If it does happen, the man who caught the seal will lose his next quarry. In fact, the rime must not be scraped off at all as long as there is fresh seal blood in the house. Only when all the blood has been taken out through the passage may this be done if necessary.

As long as un unflensed seal is in the house the platform skin must not be shaken out over the floor; nor must anyone rearrange the plaited willow twigs that form the under-layer. Care must be taken that no oil drips on to the floor, and no work may be done in iron, wood or stone.

People hunting the seal from snow huts on the sea ice must not work in soapstone. They say: The weather or the blizzard --helpless because of this soapstone one usually bewares of out on the sea ice; for there is much smoke or fog in it (the soapstone).

When living at a place where the caribou cross the water, and the site has been used as a camping ground for years past, with the result that the vegetation is very luxuriant on account of human manure, women must not sew seal skin unless they have first laid a small unstitched kamik in miniature under a stone, kamik and stone being bound together by means of a thong. This done, they may sew seal skin provided they go a short distance away from the tent.

A seal must have water as soon as it is brought inside a house. The water is allowed to fall in drops into its mouth. This is an offering to the seal.

A boy's first seal must be flensed by all the women of the village; his mother, however, simply binds her waistbelt round the seal's head and lifts it, for the head may only fall to her. While the women are flensing the carcase they have to repeat again and again: 'Move further away, move further away', pushing at one another and each trying to get the largest pieces. This race to get a part of a boy's kill brings luck. A boy whose first seal [38] is handled in this manner is called : One with flensing pieces; for it is not every boy's kill that goes through this treatment.

There are various customs besides. The first kill of some boys must not be flensed at once, but must lie in the house for some time, over by the side platform; this only means a few hours, however--never the whole night. They have a special expression for such a seal: 'the one that is laid across (i. e. the floor), as it has to be laid pointing out

from the side platform, and not out from the main platform as it would be if it had to be flensed at once."

3: Rasmussen--38 [4] (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 225, 784

"The reason why the Umingmaktôrmiut do not take things so strictly in this respect is that the ice from which they hunt the seal is not destroyed by the currents and therefore is not considered to be dangerous. And what is more, their sealing grounds are for the greater part of the year up in the fjords, where the ice is never liable to drift out to sea; this has given them a feeling of security and slackened their respect for this taboo, which elsewhere is so carefully observed."

3: Rasmussen--105-106 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 225

"The share of the hunter who has killed a bearded seal consists of the head, which is cut off at the end of the neck, and then the . . . skin round breast and back, flayed off in a continuous ring, from which to cut seal thongs. Although this is a most modest share for the man who caught the animal, he must, into the bargain, display his generosity by making this share as small as possible. [106]

Of other time-honoured shares there are the two that get the shoulders and the two that get the broad pieces of the hind limbs.

Before the actual flensing of a bearded seal begins, the hunter cuts off his share, after which the others have their say; for their interests lie in cutting the parts they are to have as big as possible, and far into the next man's share. Consequently the flensing proceeds almost like a free fight, like a knife duel, in which a man can cut right into the fingers of the one at his side. It is almost a sort of test of manhood, to show that a man is not afraid of getting a deep hack in his hands. The result is that most men's hands are covered with large and deep scars and many have one or more stiff fingers as the outcome of parted sinews. Two men work together when flensing; a dog trace is made fast to the skin of the seal. One pulls at the trace while the other flenses away, the flesh in this way being torn apart while skin and blubber are pulled out."

3: Rasmussen--106-107 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 225

"Catching common seals is looked upon as a communal enterprise, when all the men of the village work together. The one who harpoons the seal usually gets the head, entrails and the thin meat of the middle body, and, if there is meat enough and not too many to share, a part of the qo·ᵛik. The remainder of the seal is shared out among the villagers. Sometimes as among the Netsilingmiut a man has comrades with whom he exchanges certain parts of his hunting share, as for instance those who give one another certain parts of the hindquarters; those who give one another the loin; those who give one another a share in the meat of the lower body; those who give one another the shoulder piece; those who give one another blubber, consisting of a strip 15 to 20 cm wide along the entire length of the seal; those who give one another [107] the heart; those who give one another the liver, i. e. its outer piece; those who give one another the ... of the liver, i. e. its inside piece; those who give one another kidneys; those who give one another the rectum piece; those who give one another lungs; those who give one another the breast piece."

3: Rasmussen--107 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 225, 264

"When a seal is caught by those who hunt together at the breathing holes, all collect round the carcase. The man who harpooned it goes down on his knees on the ice at the head of the seal on its left. All his companions also get on their knees, but on the right of the carcase, in a half circle from head to flippers. The hunter then opens the body and cuts out a piece of the liver and small squares of blubber. A piece of liver and of blubber are then thrown far out on the ice, while the hunter cries: 'Here, here (is my offering) may there soon be another seal that will let me catch it!' Then more liver and blubber is cut out, all in small squares, a piece of liver to every piece of blubber; the hunter himself has always to eat the akugLiŋ'uAq (see sketch) [MPK: sketch filed in 116, 825], and, as soon as he has done so, all the others must rise and each one eat his piece of the liver. After the meal they carefully close the small hole through which the liver was taken, using a wound pin, in order that no blood may be wasted."

8: Cadzow--16-17
116, 225, 411

(1919) 1920

Copper Eskimo

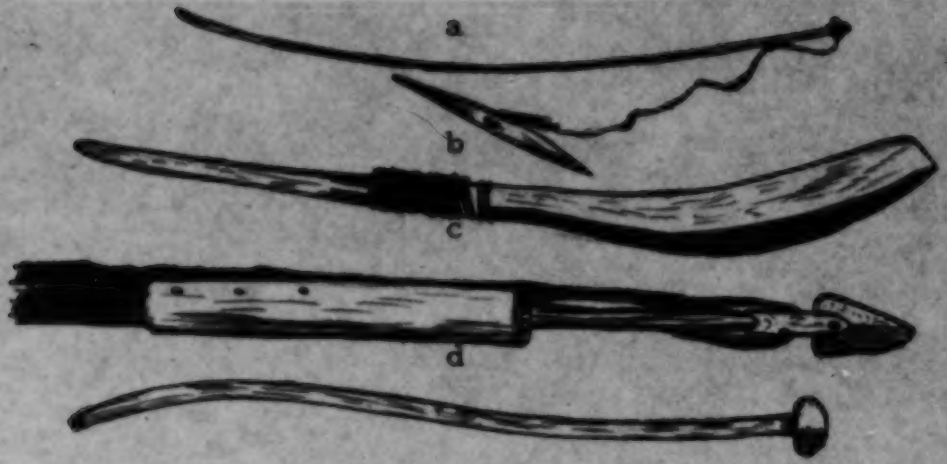


Plate IX

Figure 1

[AW:Following are the legends for Plate IX and Figure 1]

PLATE IX--SEALING EQUIPMENT

a, Bone seal indicator. b, Peg for fastening the indicator to the edge of the seal hole. c, Spoon of muskox-horn for rimming out seal holes and killing seals. d, Spear with copper-tipped togglehead, squared copper foreshaft, and with copper rivets for attaching the antler head to the wooden shaft.

FIG. 1--Seal hole finder. (38 1/2 in.)

"Sealing Equipment.--In Coronation gulf the seal is the main source of the winter food supply, and therefore the sealing harpoon (pl. ix, d) is an essential part of the equipment of every hunter among the Copper Eskimo. There are two methods of locating a seal's breathing-hole in the ice: In the first, dogs are trained for the purpose, and the seal-hole finder (fig. 1) is used; this is held in the hand like a walking-stick [17] and poked through the snow until a breathing-hole is found, when the hunter places the slender bone seal-indicator (pl. ix, a) in the opening, one end just below the surface of the water, while the other is fastened to the edge of the hole with a pointed bone peg (b) attached to a sinew cord that extends from the end of the indicator to the center of the peg. The hunter sits beside the hole with his harpoon poised ready to strike, the shaft being held in the right hand and the retrieving-line in the left. When the indicator moves upward, the animal is nearing the surface of the water, and the hunter quickly drives the harpoon toggle-head into the seal, at the same time throwing the shaft over his shoulder and grasping the line firmly with both hands. When the seal stops struggling, the hole is rimmed with a bone pick on the proximal end of the [18] harpoon shaft, or with a muskox-horn spoon (c). The seal is then dragged to the ice and killed by pushing the pointed handle of the spoon into its eye. Then the wound is skewered with a bone peg to prevent loss of the blood, which is used in making soup.

The stem of the toggle-head shown in pl. ix, d, is made of caribou-antler, and has

a line-hole bored through it from the side, halfway between the butt and the tip of the blade. The blade is a flattened triangular piece of copper, fastened in a slit cut in the distal end of the stem with a copper rivet, on a plane with the pointed butt. The function of the toggle-head is to turn at a right angle to the retrieving-line in the flesh of the seal when it parts from the foreshaft, the butt and point preventing the toggle-head from slipping from the flesh. The foreshaft is a squared strip of copper, the pointed tip of which fits into the shallow socket of the toggle-head, the proximal end being placed in a deep socket on the tip of the head. The head is made of caribou-antler, hollowed at the near end. The wooden shaft is placed in the hollowed [19] end and held with three copper rivets passed through the head and shaft.

Length of head, 8 in.
Length of foreshaft, 5 in.
Length of toggle-head, 4 in.
Width of toggle-head blade, 1 1/4 in."

12: Collinson--221-222 (1851-53) 1889 Copper Eskimo-1-2
116, 437, 221, 225, 342

"The carpenter having made an outline sketch of a human skeleton, it was placed on the grave of our deceased shipmate, in hopes that it would deter the natives from disturbing his remains. They paid us a last visit on the 3rd, and we parted very good friends. We would have been better pleased could they have abstained from stealing. There is, however, great excuse for them; such riches they had never seen before: pieces of iron hoop, empty preserved meat tins, old clothes, &c., were still eagerly sought for. In considera-[222] tion of the many bows and arrows that had been purchased from them, I presented them as a last gift with one of the small spars we had obtained at Sitka, which would nearly supply the whole tribe. It is very difficult to say where they wintered, but I do not think they went further than the inlet Mr. Jago explored. Leaving us as they did on the 9th of November, and the sun disappearing on the 18th, there was but little daylight left. That they went round Point Wollaston is, I think, almost proved to a certainty by the cylinder deposited by Mr. Skead having been removed; and that they had been in communication with the party met by Lieut. Jago is also, I conceive, evident by the fact of his seeing Hongkong beads in their possession. My belief is that they wintered on the islands to the north side of that inlet he explored, where tide and wind would occasion cracks throughout nearly the whole winter, and whence they obtain seals. Several skins full of blubber were on their sleighs when they first returned, of which Mr. Phayre purchased five, making us rather more than 60 gallons of oil. Fuel they are totally independent of, and a snow-drift affords them material

for a winter habitation, the most elaborate of which would not occupy the family more than a day in erection. While with us they were constantly on the move, the tent seldom remaining two days in the same position, unless for lake fishing."

11: Stefansson--169-170 (1908-1912) 1913 Copper Eskimo
116, 361, 225

"It was only near shore that the ice was rough, and with our light sled we made good progress; it was the first time on the trip that we did not have to pull in harness ourselves; instead we took turns in riding, two sitting on the sled at the same time and one running ahead to cheer the dogs on. We made about six miles per hour, and inside of two hours we arrived at another deserted village, about a month more recent than the one found at Cape Bexley. We were, therefore, on the trail not of a traveling party but of a migratory community.

As we understood dimly then and know definitely now, each village on such a trail should be about ten miles from the next preceding, and should be about a month more recent. The explanation of this is simple. The village of a people who hunt seal on level 'bay' ice must not be on shore, for it is not convenient for a hunter to go more than five miles at the most from camp to look for the seal-holes, and naturally there are no seal-holes [170] on land; the inhabitants of a sea village can hunt through an entire circle whose radius is about five miles; the inhabitants of a shore village can hunt through only half a circle of the same radius, for the other half of it will be on land. When the frost overtakes the seals in the fall, each of them, wherever he happens to be, gnaws several holes in the thin ice and rises to these whenever he needs to breathe. As the ice thickens he keeps them open by continuous gnawing, and for the whole of the winter that follows he is kept a prisoner in their neighborhood because of the fact that if he ever went to a considerable distance he would be unable to find a place to reach the air,

and would therefore die of suffocation. By the aid of their dogs the Eskimo find these breathing-holes of the seals underneath the snow that hides them in winter, and spear the animals as they rise for air. In a month or so the hunters of a single village will have killed all the seals within a radius of about five miles; they must then move camp about ten miles, so that a five-mile circle around their next camp shall be tangent to the five-mile circle about their last one; for if the circles overlapped there would be that much waste territory within the new circle of activities. If, then, you are following such a trail and come to a village about four months old, you will expect to find the people who made it not more than forty miles off.

In the present case our task was simplified by the fact that the group we were following had not moved straight ahead north, but had made their fourth camp west of the second. Standing on the roofs of the houses of the second camp, we could see three seal-hunters a few miles to the west, each sitting on his block of snow by a seal-hole waiting for the animal to rise."

11: Stefansson--205-206 (1908-1912) 1913 Copper Eskimo
116, 225

"It was now daylight the twenty-four hours through, and early the next morning we simultaneously sighted Eskimo and a seal basking on the ice. It is a curious thing that the art of harpooning seals on the ice is practiced almost not at all by these Eskimo. Although they were short of provisions and the seal lay in plain sight, no one in camp thought it worth while going after him, for no one present had practice in that sort of hunting. In general, among [206] the Copper Eskimo I should say that not more than one man in six knows how to hunt seals on the spring ice, and the ones who know are chiefly old men."

11: Stefansson--268 (1908-1912) 1913 Copper Eskimo
116, 225

"Although bearded seals are common enough in many districts inhabited by the eastern Eskimo, their taking is a rare thing. It is seldom or never attempted in the spring when they are basking on the ice, and only rarely in winter, when it is done by the ordinary waiting method described elsewhere, and with two men working together. Occasionally a man will spear a bearded seal thinking it is an ordinary one, in which case, if he be a stout hunter, he sometimes gets the beast and is considered a hero for it by all his countrymen. But sometimes the harpoon line proves too weak and the valuable harpoon head is carried off by the animal. Occasionally, when the line does not break, the man is not strong enough to hold the seal and the line and all are carried off."

22: Richardson--348-349 (1848-49) 1851 Copper Eskimo
116, 225

[AW: Not confined to Copper Eskimo]

"In March the seals have their young, and soon afterwards they become the principal objects of the chase to the Eskimos, who greatly esteem their dark and unsightly flesh. reckoning it as choice food. The seal, being a warm-blooded animal, respiring air, requires a breathing hole in the ice, which it has the power of keeping open in the [349] severest frosts, by constant gnawing. It is a watchful creature, with acute senses of sight and hearing; but it is no matchfor the Eskimo hunter, who has carefully studied all its habits from his infancy. As the days lengthen, the villages are emptied of their inhabitants, who move seaward on the ice to the seal hunt."

[P. 1]

MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE COPPER ESKIMO

INTRODUCTION

In 1914, when the Canadian Arctic Expedition established its headquarters at Bernard Harbour in Dolphin and Union Strait, on the western fringe of Copper Eskimo territory, the natives preserved their old culture, virtually unimpaired, despite contact with several explorers in the middle of the nineteenth century, and with others during the early years of the twentieth. The only visible change caused by these contacts was the introduction of a considerable quantity of iron, which the Eskimo hammered cold, as they hammered their native copper, and had already substituted for copper in knives, adzes, harpoon heads, and needles. From lack of ammunition the only men who possessed rifles, five in number, had fallen back on the bow and arrow, which was still the universal weapon of the chase. Of the arrows not tipped with bone about two-thirds bore tips of hammered copper and only one-third tips of iron; the ice chisel and other tools retained their copper blades and points; and the soapstone pot for cooking meat held undisputed sway in every household. All clothing was of skin or fur, mainly from the caribou and the seal; and in cut and adornment it followed without change the styles set by earlier generations. The blubber of the seal, burned in a soapstone lamp, provided the only artificial light, and throughout the winter months all the energies of the Eskimo were concentrated on the pursuit of seals at their breathing holes in the sea ice.

Ten years later the situation had undergone a profound change. Native copper had become practically valueless and served for rivets only. Bows and arrows had disappeared, because every native was now armed with a high-powered rifle. Other weapons and tools had steel or iron blades, metal cooking pots had ousted the soapstone vessels, and primus lamps and kerosene lanterns were spreading from home to home. Fur clothing was tending to follow western Eskimo patterns, and to be overlaid with bead-work, or with imported garments of cotton or wool. Dissatisfied with the old-fashioned snow-hut and skin-covered kayak, one native had even erected a plank cabin heated by an iron stove, and purchased a motor-boat to transport his household goods along the coast during the brief summer months. The tentacles of the fur trade had firmly gripped the region, and the trapping of foxes, animals of no economic importance in earlier times, now rivalled in importance the hunting of seals and caribou.

Fortunately, before this revolution occurred, the Canadian Arctic Expedition had brought out a large collection of Copper Eskimo specimens, nearly all of which are now stored in the National Museum at Ottawa. These specimens, and

321 412 tool, and the drill. In our time nearly all these tools had steel or iron blades, and a fifth had been added, a small saw with a blade of hoop iron. Saws were not numerous, however, and it was still a common sight to see a native scoring deep cuts in bone or antler with his grooving tool and then breaking out sections with his adze. The curved whittling knife gave the final shape, and rubbing, first with stone or sand and then with a strip of hide, the smoothness and polish. Musk-ox horn alone was susceptible of a different treatment; to make from it ladles and scoops, the natives split it longitudinally, steamed it over their cooking pots, then opened it out and bent it to shape by simple pressure and hammering.

239 There was current among the Copper Eskimo one other substance similar to the foregoing, baleen, but it was rather scarce, and in the eastern part of the territory almost unknown. Whether it came from stranded whales, or was brought in from the west, I did not discover. The natives used it, apparently, 237 for fishing lines only, lines mainly for catching tomcod during the winter months 227 when the more usual lines of sinew tended to become brittle with encrusted ice. 283 I never saw them cut or split baleen, but doubtless they used the whittling knife for this purpose.

HIDES AND SINEW

237 [433] It is hard for the civilised inhabitant of a warmer country to realise the immense importance of skins in the domestic economy of the Copper Eskimo. They provide him with clothes and bedding throughout both winter and summer, bags in which to store his clothing, a tent for use nearly half the year when a snow-hut was either uncomfortable or impossible, a cover for his kayak, straps and lashings for his sled, harnesses and traces for the dogs, lines and lashings for harpoons and other weapons, packing lines, dog packs, water buckets, pokes for meat and blubber, and other articles for which Europeans utilise cloth, rope, or metal. It was, consequently, of the utmost importance to the native that he should know how to treat skins to the best advantage. Fortunately, the two animals on which he depended most for his food, the seal and the caribou, were precisely the ones whose hides were the most useful.

281 [225] *Seal Skins.* The Copper Eskimo had two methods of skinning a seal. They generally made a cut around the base of each flipper, another around the neck, and a third down the belly, after which they separated the skin from the blubber with a knife. As it was impossible to remove all the blubber in this way, the skin was then soaked in warm water. Holding one end in her mouth while the [462] other remained in the pot, the woman (for the work almost invariably fell on [412] the housewife) scraped it thoroughly with her curved knife. As soon as the weather was warm enough she set it out to dry, sometimes on top of the house, sometimes on the ground, sometimes pegged over and around a block of snow.

A sealskin thus dried was roughly oval in shape and still retained the hair [415] on the outside. If you folded in the ends, doubled it over and tied a line to each end, you had the common Copper Eskimo fishing bag; if you laced each [492] end across through the holes by which it was pegged out, you had a dog pack, broad and flat in the middle where it rested on the animal's back, and bag-shaped at each end for holding the meat or clothing. The hair was no 281 disadvantage in such skins; indeed, for raincoats and for spring foot gear it 294 was indispensable, but as the skin was more supple without it, it was generally removed by resoaking in warm water and scraping with a knife. To soften the skin still more, and to change the outer surface from a dark colour to white, it was subjected to further scraping, and, after drying, rubbed between the hands and chewed between the teeth, when odd scraps that came away found lodging in the chewer's stomach. From these creamy white skins were made the sealskin

shoes worn by both sexes during the greater part of the year. Steeped in urine for several hours they became waterproof, and served for summer boots, water buckets, quivers, and other articles.

For lines and lashings (which the men made, not the women) it was not necessary to tan the skin; after the removal of the hair the man merely soaked it for a third time in warm water, and cut it in a continuous spiral with his curved whittling knife, while his wife or a friend held the severed parts taut and slightly apart. In cutting he simply pressed the knife, guiding it with his thumb from below, but wherever the strip was very narrow he generally sawed the blade up and down, holding the severed parts in his left hand and guiding the blade with the left index. Newly cut lines were stretched taut between two or more poles out of doors to dry.

The second method of skinning a seal was used only when the owner required a bag with a small opening for storing blubber. The woman then cut the skin around the base of the neck and from the bottom of one hind flipper across to the other. To separate the flesh from the skin—and as far as possible also the blubber—she circled the long snow-knife round between them from each end; then by drawing back the flippers and severing them at the joints with her curved knife, she could draw off the skin over the tail. Subsequently she cut away most of the adhering blubber and sewed up the bottom, leaving the neck open to be tied with a sealskin cord when the poke was filled. In most cases she sewed a strap-handle to each end to facilitate handling, as these pokes when filled with blubber weighed from 150 to 200 pounds; if the poke was small, however, she substituted for the straps a short stick thrust through the neck. The Copper Eskimo never skinned an animal through the mouth after the manner of the western Eskimo, or closed their pokes with stoppers.

Although bearded seals were numerous in Dolphin and Union strait, the Eskimo secured very few; and they used for harpoon and sled lines most of the skins of those they did kill, though they were fully aware of the superiority of bearded over foetid sealskins for foot gear. Even their kayaks they covered with the skin of the much commoner foetid seal. Naturally, they treated both kinds of skin in the same way.

Caribou Skins. More important even than sealskins to the Copper Eskimo were the caribou skins from which he made his bedding and the greater part of his clothes, as well as dog harnesses, spring and summer tents, and many other articles that were absolutely indispensable. He skinned the caribou in a way slightly different from that of the ordinary white hunter or from that of the Indians to the south. Beginning at the throat, he cut right down the belly to the tail, then from the hock of each leg up the back as far as the knee, continuing up the inside of the thigh until he reached the incision along the belly. He next punched away the skin from the body down one side, drew out the tail and pulled the skin off down to the feet, where he cut it away at the level of the front of the hoof. Then he slit it down the side of the cheek through the eye and round the base of the horn, and punched it loose with the handle of the hunting knife. Rolling the animal over, he pulled out the skin from below, punched it free of the whole body, and stripped it off down the remaining two legs. A final cut down this cheek similar to the one on the other side, and a few more punches, completed the operation. Thus the skin of the head was removed in three sections that joined at the neck; but the middle strip ran from between the horns to the top of the nose only, as the Eskimo never troubled to remove the skin around the nostrils. Whenever the horns were in the velvet the hunter could jerk the skin over them; but with old bulls whose horns had many branches and roots almost meeting on the forehead, he was often satisfied to strip only the cheeks and leave the skin on the middle of the face untouched. Occasionally he slit from the nose down to midway between the horns, leaving

301
321
291
53

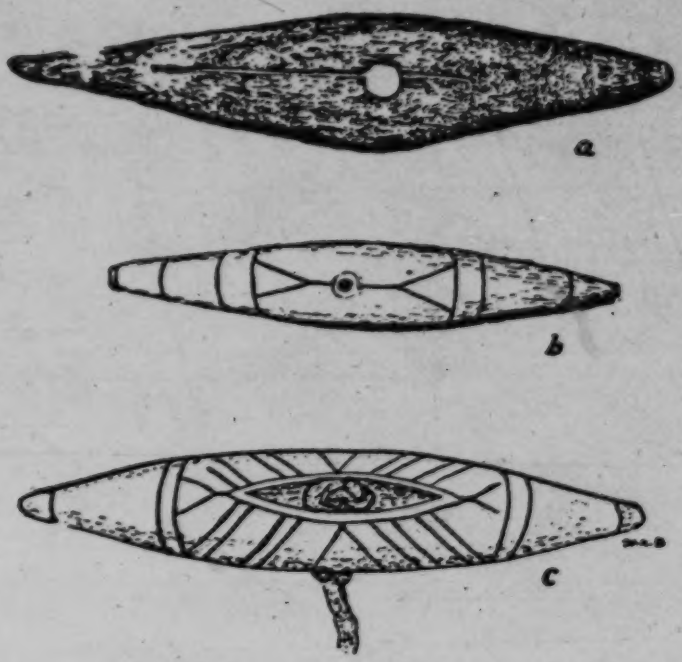


Figure 40. Women's belt toggles. IV.D.1372, 844. 1/1.

301
321
291
225

For a time I fancied that belt toggles could be distinguished from the toggles used for hauling seals (Figure 150) by the direction of the line-hole, but my collection of both kinds showed that any such distinction was illusory; in both, the hole was drilled indifferently from top to bottom or from side to side. It is probable, indeed, that many a toggle that served for hauling seals during the winter months became a belt toggle when the sealing season ended. At all events, I know of no criterion for separating the two except that if a toggle is of wood, or if its hole is of very small diameter, it probably terminated a belt strap and was not used for sealing.

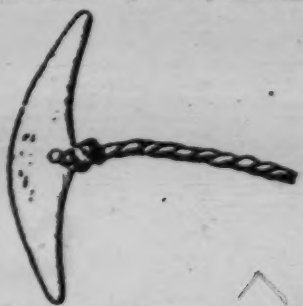


Figure 41. Toggle from child's belt. IV.D.213. 1/1.

321
412
302
291
301

Combs and Snow Goggles. Though not strictly ornaments, these may conveniently find a place under that heading. Combs were not very highly regarded by the Copper Eskimo. Many women employed their fingers instead, and those who did possess combs used them only rarely. All that I saw were made of bone, and seldom exceeded 4 inches in length.

28: Jennese E-5 (1914-1916) 1946
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

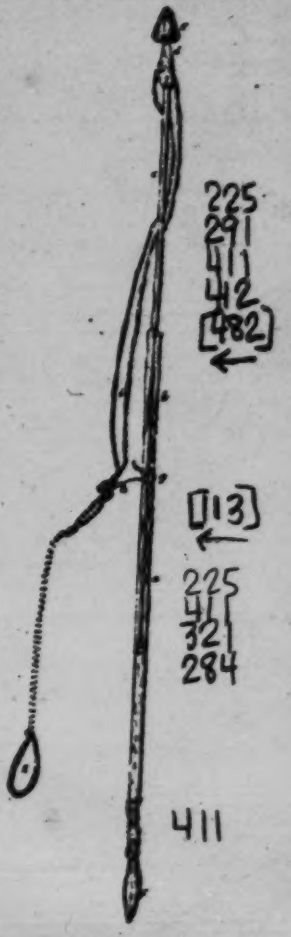
412
321
322

Because many natives experienced difficulty in obtaining a piece of wood large enough to carve into a bowl, they often substituted a curved piece of bone or of musk-ox horn, lashed to a wooden handle. Specimens of these more or less makeshift scoops are illustrated in Figure 138, where *a* (IV.D.135) has a bowl of musk-ox horn, and *b* (IV.D.179) of bone. The handles of such scoops could be lengthened, if necessary, by lashing to the walking-stick or fish spear, for which purpose their owners often cut notches at the ends.

SEALING EQUIPMENT

225
221

In the spring and autumn, when the seals were basking on the surface of the ice, Copper Eskimo hunters occasionally tried to crawl near enough to transfix them with their harpoons; but so slight were their chances of getting within range—unless perhaps in rough ice where there were sheltering hummocks—that most men never attempted the feat until they obtained rifles, which extended the effective distance for attack from 8 or 10 yards to 100 yards. Every man, on the other hand, and even some of the younger women, regularly tracked down the seals' breathing holes in the ice during the winter months and harpooned the animals when they rose to the surface. In midwinter, when the days were short, they started out for their hunting grounds half an hour before dawn, and did not return home until after dark. Their outfit was fairly standardized, though not always complete. Each man wore a long outer coat of thick caribou fur to protect his body from the cold. Sewn to the back of this coat was a bone button (*See* Figure 37) for the attachment of various tools, viz., a scoop to clear away the snow, bone skewers for closing the wounds in the seals, a toggle to drag them home, a spare harpoon head, and sometimes a foot-pad to protect the hunter's feet as he waited motionless, 1, 2, or even 3 hours, over the breathing hole. In his hand he carried his harpoon, the usual long, two-edged knife, and an "indicator" to warn him when a seal was rising to breathe; and from one wrist hung a special toggle that he attached to the trace of his dog. His method of hunting is described in "Life of the Copper Eskimos", Reports of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, vol. XII, pt. A, pages 112-114; here we need consider only the details of his tools and weapons.



Harpoons. The harpoon was roughly the height of a man, or from 5 feet 6 inches to 6 feet long; and it varied only in minor details (Figure 139). It contained essentially four parts—a shaft, usually of wood, but occasionally of two or more pieces of antler riveted and lashed together; a bone or antler (very rarely, copper) foreshaft that fitted into a hollow bone cap at the end of the shaft; a detachable head with a long hand line of plaited sinew;

Figure 139. Sealing harpoon. *a*: wooden shaft; *b*: bone socket-piece riveted to the shaft with copper nails; *c*: antler foreshaft; *d*:antler head; *e*: copper blade; *f*: antler butt; *g*, *h*: sinew from hand line tucked under the thong that runs along the shaft, the thong itself being held down at this point with a copper staple; *i*: hand line of braided sinew; *k*: grip of hand line. IV.D.694. 1/10.

and a pointed bone or antler butt for planting the weapon upright in the snow. The butt was merely lashed to the end of the shaft with rawhide or sinew whipping; but the bone cap at the other end was riveted with bone or copper pins through two spurs that projected down the sides of the shaft, and the tapering end of the foreshaft was firmly wedged into its hollow by a packing of skin or fur. Through a hole drilled in the shaft just below the cap passed a sealskin thong that ran tautly one-third, one-half, or three-quarters the length of the shaft and was then knotted through another hole; it served, in conjunction with a piece of sinew attached to the hand line, to hold the harpoon head against the foreshaft. At the place where the sinew tucked under it, some hunters lashed the thong tightly against the shaft with a whipping of rawhide, or held it down with a copper "staple".

All the Copper Eskimo harpoon heads I have seen had blades separate from the head, although specimens of the old Thule culture, in this area as elsewhere, sometimes have the blade and head in one piece. The older Copper Eskimo harpoon heads were made of bone or antler, and the bone or copper blade, shaped exactly like an arrow point, was invariably set horizontally in the same plane as the line holes, and secured with a single rivet of bone or copper. The butt of the head was cut aslant, giving a single sharp spur, and a circular hole was drilled for the insertion of the foreshaft. Three of these old harpoon heads are illustrated in Figure 140.

Figure 140. Old harpoon heads. *a*, *b*: bone blades; *c*: copper blade. IV.D.1658, 600, 1626. 1/2.

The introduction of iron did not change the type of the Copper Eskimo harpoon head, but only its material. At first only the blades were of iron; the heads proper continued to be made from bone and antler. By 1914, however, nearly all heads had come to be of iron, or occasionally of brass, and what seems to have been a new feature was introduced, a lengthening and bifurcation of the butt, resulting in two, stout, chisel-edged spurs, which were themselves often notched (Figure 141). This change we must probably ascribe to influences from Hudson Bay, where the spur of the ordinary sealing harpoon head has been bifurcated for several centuries. Among the Copper Eskimo every metal harpoon head that came under my notice possessed this feature, but not a single bone or antler one, except the specimen that will now be discussed.

Figure 142 shows a harpoon head without separate blade that was included in a large collection of specimens brought back by Mr. Stefansson and labelled Minto Inlet, Victoria Island. If it actually came from that district, it must

surely have been unearthed in some old ruin of pre-Copper Eskimo times, for it is identical with specimens that have been dug up in old dwellings in both Mackenzie Delta and northern Alaska. I rather suspect, however, that it came from one of these western areas, as did several other specimens in the collection that were certainly wrongly labelled.

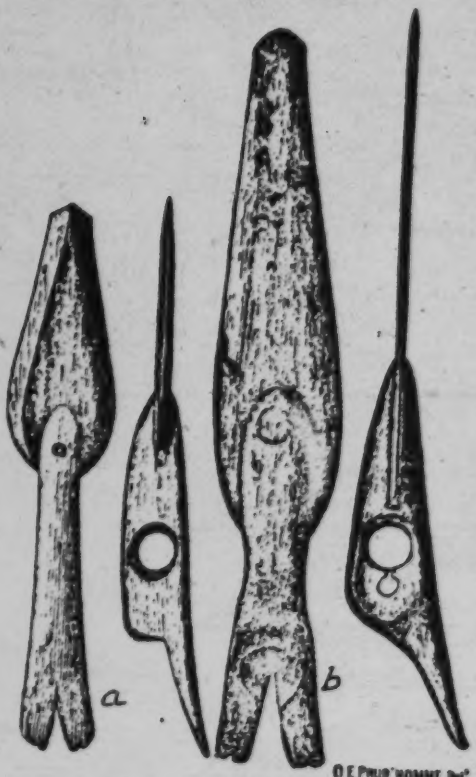


Figure 141. Modern harpoon heads with iron blades. a, IV.D.313. 1/1; b, IV.D.1034, 3/2.

Figure 142. Bone harpoon head. IV.D.1334. 1/1.

The line attached to the head of the harpoon averaged in length a little over 2 metres and was made of plaited sinew, of sealskin, or of both combined, some hunters preferring sinew for the grip, but, for the toggle end, a sealskin thong less liable to fray. All lines were double from the toggle nearly to the grip; and to one or both strands, about 3 feet from the toggle end, was tied a short piece of sinew, which tucked under the thong running along the side of the shaft and held the lower part of the line taut until the seal was struck, when it immediately slipped out of place.

When the line was of plaited sinew it was graded from an 8- or 16-ply weave down to a 4 or 6 ply. At times this was accomplished by twisting some of the strands together, a 12-ply line, for example, being combined in twos to make one of 6 ply, and this perhaps again to 4 ply; the two ends could be

411
283
284
225

spliced, or fastened to a sealskin thong. More often, perhaps, there was a simple tapering of the line, the narrow end, after passing through the toggle, being

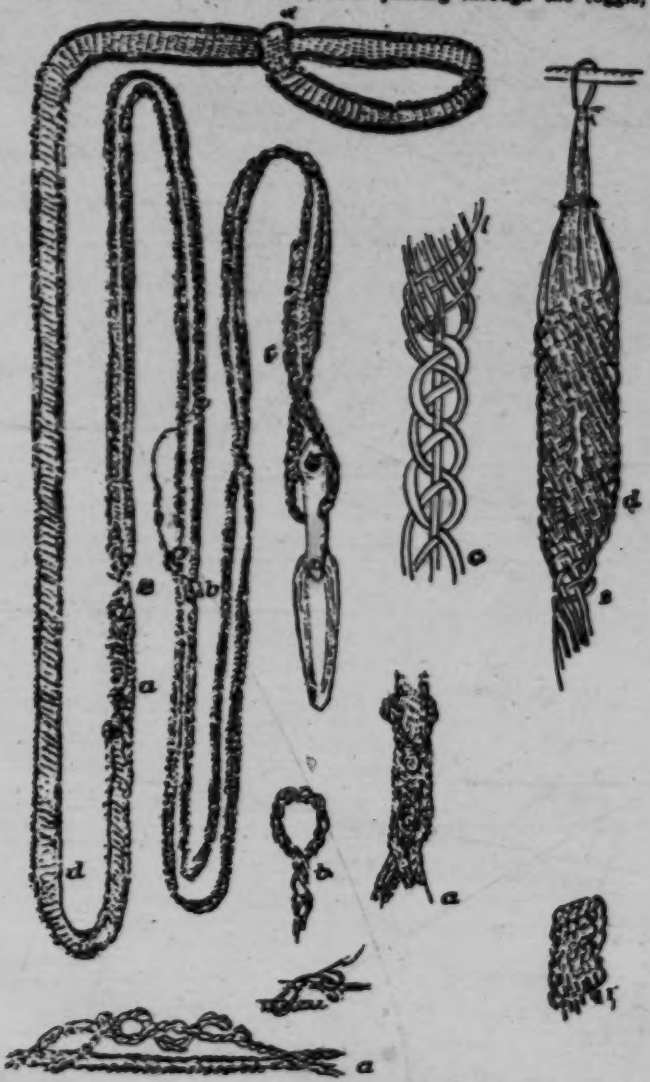


Figure 143. Details of a harpoon line made from plaited sinew. IV.D.308. 1/3.

joined back in various ways, occasionally by a simple knot. At the thick end, which the hunter held in his hand, was a running noose. The accompanying illustrations explain more clearly the details of construction (Figure 143).

Scoops. The scoop (*ilaun*) (Figure 144) used for clearing the snow from the breathing hole of the seal had an average length of 1½ feet, and was made of musk-ox horn, mounted on a handle of horn, bone, antler, or wood. The two parts were generally spliced with a V-shaped notch, rarely by bevelling the ends and overlapping; pegs of copper or bone, and lashings of sealskin or sinew, held them firmly together. A small loop enabled the tool to be attached to the coat button; usually it passed through two holes in the handle and the ends were either tucked under the lashings around the splice or knotted. The handle tapered to a rounded point with which the hunter stabbed the eye of the seal when it was drawn to the surface.

412
225
321
284

Figure 144. Scoop for sealing, of musk-ox horn. IV.D. 182. Approx. 1/4.

Indicators. The seal indicator and its use have been described in Reports of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, vol. XII, pt. A, page 113. Figure 145 illustrates the commoner type, the pencil of bone slightly more than a foot long, with the small bone disk at the bottom and the cord leading away to the needle that was pegged into the snow. Often, but not always, the top of the pencil, perforated for the cord, was made of a separate piece of musk-ox horn, neatly drilled, that fitted like a cap. During our residence in their territory a few natives experimented with indicators made, not from bone, but from the steel springs of some old rifle bolts; how effective they were I cannot say.

412
225
[321]

For drawing up this indicator a few sealers used a fine hook of copper lashed with sinew to a short bone handle; a specimen is shown in Figure 146.

Figure 145. Seal indicator. IV.D.1513. 1/2.

Figure 146. Hook for withdrawing indicator from seal-hole. IV.D.484. Approx. 1/2.

Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, vol. XII, page 113, describes also a less common "indicator" made from a strip of caribou leg sinew that was slit to hold a wisp of bird's down. Unfortunately I failed to collect a specimen of this object.

Foot-pad. In midwinter many sealers carried a small square pad of caribou fur, or preferably of polar bear fur, to place under their feet when watching over the seal holes. Like the wound pins and the scoop, it hung from the button at the back of the coat, whereas the knife and the seal indicator were usually carried in the hand with the harpoon.

225
[482]

225 415 412 321

Skewers for Seals. To hold his extra harpoon head, the sealer attached to the button on the back of his coat a small bag made from seal or caribou skin, or from the foot or neck of some waterfowl such as a loon or a swan. Around the outside of this bag he sewed a narrow band of skin into which he inserted three or four bone skewers for closing the wound in the seal, and one or more bone toggles with short loops for dragging it home (Figure 147). The skewers,

Figure 147. Bag for spare harpoon head, skewers, and toggles. IV.D.719. 1/2.

though knobbed at the end like the skewers used for caribou meat, usually had a slightly different shape; for the caribou skewers, which penetrated only the flesh of the animal, not its skin, were rounded down to the point, whereas the sealing skewers (Figure 148), which had to pass through the tough hide on both sides of the wound, were bevelled in such a way that they had at least two, and often four, cutting edges similar to those on a bone arrow head.

425
412
321

412
225
231

Figure 148. Bone skewers for closing wounds in seals. IV.D.719. 2/3.

Figure 149. Toggles for leading a dog. IV.D.155. 1/2.

All sealers carried these bone skewers stuck in a strip of skin, but not all of them burdened themselves with a bag and a spare harpoon. Lacking the bag, they merely cut a hole in the strip of skin for slipping it over the coat button.

Toggle for Leading Dog. Figure 149 illustrates the usual toggle for leading a dog to the sealing ground. In principle it is the same as the toggle on the harness. The rigid parts are of bone, antler, or musk-ox horn; the cord and strap, of sealskin or caribou leg sinew. The broad loop hung over the sealer's wrist, and the small toggle buttoned into the loop at the end of the dog trace. There was no variation except in size, and no ornamentation.

Toggles for Hauling Seals. Toggles for hauling seals were indistinguishable from women's belt toggles (*See* page 50). Like most of the latter they were made of bone, antler, or musk-ox horn, nearly always the first, measured between 2½ and 4 inches from tip to tip, and had the shape of a crescent that tapered towards each end. Two ends of a short cord of sealskin, or more usually of plaited sinew, were passed through the hole and knotted to form a loop (Figure 150). The sealer threaded the toggle through a hole in the seal's mouth, passed it back through the loop and attached it to the trace of his dog, which then dragged the carcass home.

Sealing toggles, like other bone implements, were often ornamented with incised lines. These will be discussed in another place.

Figure 150. Toggle for hauling seals. IV.D.197. 1/2.

LAND HUNTING EQUIPMENT

Bows and Arrows

Most bows were made from three pieces of spruce wood, a middle piece and two "horns," joined together with the usual "cleft" or V splice (Figure 151*b*). Bows made from a single piece of wood were comparatively rare (Figure 151*a*), though one, owned by a 6-foot Tree River native, was stronger than any of the three-piece weapons. From the eastern end of Coronation Gulf came a few bows built up from musk-ox horn, caribou antler, or both materials combined (Figure 152), indicating a dearth of suitable wood in that region. In one of them, two pieces of musk-ox horn have been joined wth a cleft splice, but elsewhere in this bow, and in all other bows of horn or antler, the makers have used the less difficult scarfed splice, and strengthened it in places with copper or iron rivets. A few wooden bows have scarfed joints also, but they are mostly small weapons for women and children.

Because dry spruce has little tensility and easily fractures, every bow was strengthened with a score or more strands of braided sinew[1] that extended along the whole back and passed around the nocks (Figure 151). Some hunters

[1] One bow, a small one for a woman or child, had thongs of rawhide, presumably from want of sinew.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

with their own country, which contained enough seals and caribou to satisfy all their needs. 812

I intended to revisit the settlement on Victoria Island at the earliest opportunity, but preferred to choose my own travelling companions. Our guests therefore returned alone, while I arranged to spend a few days in the hut of the leader of our local tribe. My host, the hero of the skirmish with the grizzly, had now recovered the use of his right hand, and was preparing to cross to the Liston and Sutton Islands for the seal-hunt, since it was still too early in the winter to build a hut on the sea-ice far away from land. He suggested that I should join his train to the islands and push on later to Victoria Island, which was but thirty-five miles beyond; and as the invitation accorded well with my plans I accepted gladly. 114 123 (225)

The wife of my host was Light, the lady who had filched the pot and the frying-pan from our station. It has not been my habit to lodge among thieves, but my experience on this occasion was most encouraging. Light was charming as a hostess. She licked my plate before each meal that I might eat from a clean dish, and when handing me boiled seal meat from her steaming pot she squeezed it tenderly between thumb and forefinger that no surplus juice might drip on my clothing. Lacking candy, she showered on me the national substitute, delicate cubes of oily seal-blubber; 123 (264) (262)

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

path almost within reach of a shotgun. We had all the meat that we could carry, and did not wish to alarm them needlessly; so I cowed my excited dogs into quiescence, and stationed Palaiyak at the handle-bars of the sled to check a run-away. Neither of us thought of Johansen, who plodded wearily behind on his snow-shoes, noticing nothing. But when his team sighted the herd it dashed away so suddenly that the astonished driver had no time even to throw himself on top of the toboggan. The caribou fled; the dogs pursued them, Johansen pursued the dogs, and I watched the stampede through the binoculars. The herd disappeared at last over a distant ridge, and the dogs, losing all zest for a chase where the quarry was no longer in sight, stretched out their panting bodies on the snow and awaited the wrathful Johansen. He wheeled them round and led them back to the trail, their heads drooping penitently, and their tails trailing between their legs. No one ventured a word as the doleful procession drew near; we silently banished the incident into the storehouse of memory and resumed our interrupted march.

It seemed strange to us then that the Coppermine Eskimos did not hunt these caribou during the winter months, instead of watching for hours over the breathing-holes of seals, exposed to every gale that swept the level ice-fields. When we questioned some of them a few days later, they explained that the intense cold

CONTINUED
ON
NEXT FICHE

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

224
225 inland would snap the lashings of their bows. This was not true, for other Eskimos who possessed no weapons except bows and arrows before the introduction of rifles hunted in the interior all through the
[354] winter. But these inland Eskimos used caribou fat in
[171] their stone lamps, and caribou fat is a miserable substitute for seal-blubber, which gives a far purer and hotter flame. There lay the real explanation. The Coppermine Eskimos could have hunted the caribou if they wished, but they preferred the sea-ice and its more comfortable homes lit up by the burning blubber.

132 The temperature was only —30° F., 20° higher than inland, when we reached the mouth of the Coppermine; yet the cold seemed more biting, for the air was damp, the atmosphere foggy, and a slight north-
123 east wind blew directly in our faces. We struck out
[225] northward over the ice, and on the second day sighted three Eskimos standing over their seal-holes. They viewed with alarm the strange sled and toboggan, so different from any of their own; but our peace-signal banished their fears, and they joyfully guided us to their village a few miles farther on. The whole population turned out to welcome us and to assist in setting up our tent, which they seemed to understand almost
[354] as well as ourselves. They understood, also, our stove for burning wood, for they informed us that there was no driftwood within five miles of their settlement and
177 offered to lend us two stone lamps and a little blubber.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

transport all his property even with two wives and six dogs.

The natives travelled sixteen miles before they unhitched their teams and built new snow-houses for the night. The men went sealing the next morning, for at this season of the year they rarely had food for more than three days, and could travel long distances only in stages. Elated with the number of seals they captured they moved on the following morning, although the temperature was —29° F., and a howling north-west gale lashed their faces with hard snow. Johansen and I put on masks to protect our cheeks and noses, but discarded them before noon when the thick layer of frost that formed on their inside began to cling to our chins. Many of the Eskimos had their cheeks frozen, still more their wrists, for their short travelling mittens left an uncovered space between the hands and the coat-sleeves. Yet in the height of the storm a woman crouched down in the lee of her sled, withdrew a tiny baby from under her jacket and leisurely changed its sole garment, a diaper of caribou fur. The baby suffered no harm, apparently; but children were not always so fortunate, and the infant mortality was terribly high.

We had no intention of letting this horde of more than a hundred natives break in upon the tranquillity of Bernard Harbour without due warning. Our dogs

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

speak the white man's language and perform his intricate dances.

The performance ended at last, and the people began to disperse to their huts. Cockney, who was among the first to vanish, hastened to the station to describe my abnormal behaviour and organize a strong party that would bring me safely home. But before he had finished his narrative I myself arrived on the scene and offered a more reasonable explanation of my conduct.

The natives living out in the strait became very friendly again when the charge of murder was lifted from my head. I visited their settlement twice for periods of three or four days, staying each time with my old acquaintance, Ikpuck. The sun was now much higher in the sky, and a mildness in the atmosphere indicated the approach of spring. Snow-huts would soon be untenable; the slight melting of their ceilings around noon had already caused some of the people to move into large tents made of caribou skins. With the advent of longer days the hunters captured more seals, and the women were packing the surplus blubber into large bags to cache on the coast until autumn. Everything seemed to be changing. The various bands that had united in midwinter were separating out again and moving to different sealing-grounds; and every fortnight, as the new sealing-grounds became exhausted, they moved their settlements forward a few more miles.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

few more miles. Even the little children had work to do, for this harvest season would last only until May, when the breaking up of the sea-ice would drive the natives from their sealing to fish and hunt caribou on the land.

It was time now to decide what my own movements should be during the summer months, and I suggested to Ikpuck that I might join his train to Victoria Island, taking my own outfit. The old man was delighted with the plan, and, having no children of his own, formally adopted me into his family, which consisted of himself and his wife Icehouse, Sculpin or Jennie, Icehouse's daughter by a former marriage, and an adopted nephew named Knife-Blade. The Runner, a married son of Icehouse, intended to join the party; probably also two or three families of near kinsmen. The entire band would assemble on the ice within the next three or four weeks, when Ikpuck would send word to me at the station. In the meantime I could travel east with Cox, who needed a companion and a dog-team for surveying a portion of the coast-line.

The short trip with Cox was a pleasant change from constant association with the Eskimos; it was like moving from one world into another. Yet we could not avoid the natives entirely. Two families were hunting large bearded seals in a bay a few miles east of our station, and a small band had camped near Cape

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

Krusenstern to intercept the herds of caribou that were now migrating northward from their winter home on the Barren Lands. Both these camps we passed without stopping, glad that the few logs of driftwood along the coast made it necessary to seek their blubber-lamps for drying our boots and mittens. The wood petered out just beyond Cape Krusenstern, and we did lodge one night in a native's tent; but when Cox tried to take observations outside for latitude and longitude, his sextant and artificial horizon attracted so many curious observers that he seldom caught a glimpse of the sun. The long-suffering topographer finally became so ruffled that we hastily left the settlement and camped seven miles away beside a large log of cottonwood that provided enough fuel for three days.

Hardly had we pitched our tent when a sled appeared coming up from the south. The travellers were Anderson and Castel, returning from their unsuccessful attempt to reach Fort Norman. With infinite labour they had struggled through deep snow from the valley of the Coppermine to Dease River. There Anderson had expected to find white men, or at least Indians working for them, who would carry the mail to Fort Norman before the ice broke up; but the country was deserted. The winter was then so advanced that if he pushed on to Fort Norman he could not return to Bernard Harbour in time to organize our scientific work for the spring and summer. He

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

ing my brief absence. It was now mid-April, and the natives were travelling in easy stages toward the land, allowing a few days between each migration for the women and children to freight forward the pokes of blubber and the men to resume their sealing. All the families had adopted skin tents in place of snow-houses, or, if their tents were still cached on the coast, they roofed circular walls of snow with the skins of caribou and musk-oxen. The camp was mottled with clothing, suspended from sticks, to dry in the warm sun; and at every little snow-flurry the women rushed from the tents to beat the light flakes from each garment before they melted and spoiled the fur. Night and day had merged into one another, the sun disappearing for one hour only at midnight; and the temperature remained fairly constant around 15°F., except at noon, when it mounted at times to the freezing-point.

The younger women, who were as well versed as the men in the peculiar habits of the seal, often went out with the hunters to escape the monotonous care of clothes and blubber. Each seal appeared to have its special territory, like a bird in the nesting season; and every half-hour or so it came to the surface to breathe. In summer, with open water all around, it rose at any place; but when the sea froze in the autumn it could reach the atmosphere only by breaking through the thin sheet of ice that covered its domain. The breathing-holes made at that season remained open

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

225 136 all winter, for the snow that drifted over them, mantling the whole ice-field, kept them from freezing beyond the power of the animal to break through at its next visit. The seal then remained in this territory, making irregular circuits from one hole to another.

225 The Eskimo adjusted his hunting to the animal's habits. When his well-trained dog, nosing over the surface, scented the taint of a seal-hole and vigorously scratched up the snow, he drove it back and himself cleared out the cavity with a small scoop. Then from the back of his coat he brought forth an "indicator," a thin stick of bone that resembled a knitting-needle with a small disc near the lower end. He arranged this to float upright in the water, and adjusted the snow around the top until the opening was scarcely visible. Everything was now ready, and, harpoon in hand, he crouched on the lee side of the hole to await his quarry. Sometimes it appeared within a few minutes; sometimes, when it was visiting other holes in the circuit, not for several hours. But when the indicator bobbed rapidly up and down with the air-bubbles he knew that the seal was rising to the surface; and when the indicator jerked suddenly upward he drove his harpoon down through the centre of the hole and clung to the line with all his might.

123 The days passed pleasantly by. As a member of Ikpuck's household I occupied one edge of his sleeping-platform and stored my supplies on the snow wall

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

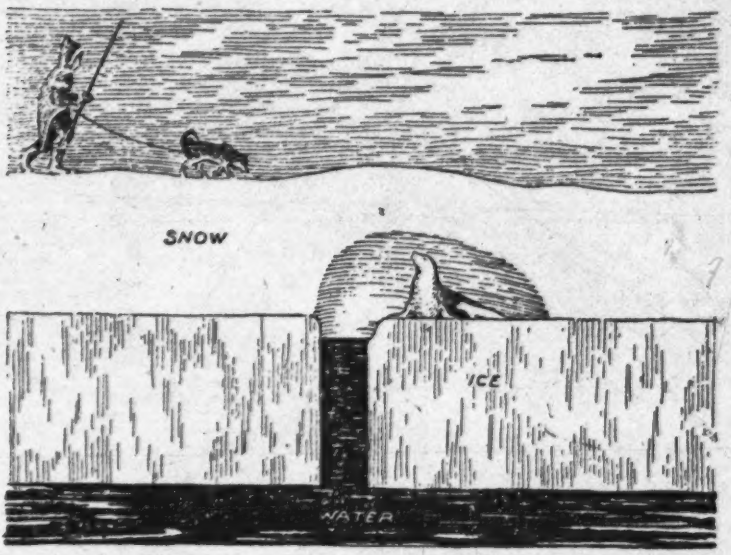
with seal meat and hot tea. So ended our little journey, which began as a pleasant excursion, but developed, for me at least, into a rather toilsome march. Ikpuck was more accustomed to such vicissitudes, and thought the incident hardly worth mentioning.

We lingered a fortnight longer on the sea-ice, revelling in the mild weather of the Arctic spring. Day and night were hardly distinguishable, for the end of April saw the midnight sun. It mattered little whether we retired to our sleeping-bags at midnight or at noon; the night hours were preferable for travelling, because by 7 P.M. the melting slush of noon began to freeze again and the heavily laden sleds glided along more easily. When the days were warm and sunny a few seals emerged from their holes to bask on the surface of the ice, and in clear weather one or two herds of caribou marched steadily past us toward Victoria Island.

Slowly we too moved northward, travelling about twelve miles at a time, then halting for a week to allow the hunters to capture a few more seals, and their wives to accumulate more blubber. During one of these journeys my companions discovered a seal-hole covered as usual by the crust of snow. I thought it was nothing but the ordinary breathing-hole, about a foot in diameter, leading down to the water, and was lingering beside my sled, when Ikpuck called me over to examine it. Burrowed out in the snow alongside the

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

225 hole was a small oval chamber where the seal had given birth to its pup two months before and nourished it during the first days of its existence. How long the young seal remained in this chamber before it followed its mother into the water, and whether it



ever returned there to rest after its long swims, I do not know. A white man would have walked over its home and detected nothing. When my companions pointed out to me the peculiar convexity of the crust which had first attracted their attention, my untrained eyes could hardly distinguish it from a score of similar inequalities within the radius of a quarter of a mile.

LENGTHENING DAYS

The Eskimos, who were greatly amused at my ignorance of everything pertaining to sealing, now scored another laugh at my expense. As we gazed down into the seal-hole one of them asked me whether I intended to drink from it. The joke seemed so obvious that I answered rather casually, "No. I do not care to drink salt sea-water." But the men around me smiled, and my questioner, kneeling down, scooped up a handful of slush ice that was floating on the surface, let it drain through his fingers for a moment, and swallowed it with gusto. Still doubting, I tested the ice myself; it was perfectly fresh, being simply the pure snow above converted into slush when it fell into the water.

The only hardship we suffered on these journeys was thirst, caused by the want of liquids in our diet. We breakfasted on cold boiled seal meat left over from our supper, dragged the heavy sleds from ten to fifteen miles, and re-erected the cumbersome tents at the conclusion of the march; then, when the day's work was ended, we sat down to our second meal, and received from the cooking-pot another ration of seal meat. No fruit, no vegetables; morning and night nothing but seal meat washed down with ice-cold water or hot broth. The pot of tea I made as soon as the tents were erected gave little relief to so many parched throats. One man drank two large cups of soup, two of tea, and nine of ice-cold water, all within the space

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

484
271 of three hours. At times I myself almost rivalled his feat without either quenching my thirst or feeling that it was in any way abnormal.

221 Early in May we camped four miles from the south
361 coast of Victoria Island, where the hunters could con-
• 225 tinue sealing, if they wished, or intercept the caribou as
224 they grazed on the beach before proceeding inland. Sealing was the more profitable occupation, since the caribou were lean from long travelling and their meat
[237] satisfied the hunger of neither men nor dogs. Even their hides were useless, for the larvæ of warble-flies had profusely perforated them, and the long white fur of winter was beginning to shed and give place to
[261] a shorter coat of brown. But my companions, who had lived on seal meat alone for four months, craved variety, and the sight of caribou increased the desire.
[177] We divided our party; those who had only bows and arrows continued to watch over the seal-holes, and the three who possessed rifles hunted caribou, Ikpuck with a .44 Winchester, The Runner with a .22 Remington, and myself with a Ross Sporting .280.

224 Our first caribou hunt gave me some useful training for the days to follow. A man who had risen earlier than the rest sighted five caribou passing our camp a mile to the eastward, and awakened Ikpuck and me. We dressed hastily, and, without waiting for breakfast, raced at top speed for the shore to cut them off as soon as they landed. Breathless with the exertion,

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

752
132 the day, and its light was doubled by reflection from the snow. So man, like the animals, changed his colour
142 with the season. The faces of the Eskimos during the dark days of winter had been as fair as an Englishman's; now they were tanned to the deep rich brown of a southern European. One or two appeared to be darker still, but I strongly suspected that they could be appreciably lightened by a liberal application of soap and water.

372 Ikpuck and I conveyed his blubber pokes to a small
417 island three miles off the coast, where we covered them with boulders to protect them from sea-gulls and foxes. The sea-gulls were easily deterred, but only a well-built cache could keep out the foxes, which worm their way into the smallest crevices. Before open water cut off communication with the shore, however, all animals would leave the island, and nothing could disturb our pokes throughout the summer.

225 Continual sealing began to pall on the Eskimos when the safe disposition of their blubber removed the last
132 excuse for lingering on the sea-ice. The long winter had come to an end, and the midnight sun was shining over their heads. They forgot the monotonous hours of confinement within the dimly lighted huts, when the blizzards raged outdoors and the twilight of noon resembled night rather than day. The earth was
136 awakening to life again after its long sleep. Ducks
137 and loons flew overhead, the ptarmigan in the valleys

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

• 225
142
291
231

Every morning at daybreak the hunters departed for the sealing-grounds.

[p. 128-F]

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

224
[201] the surrounding landscape. A conventional signal, the rapid raising and lowering of the arms, notified those in camp if caribou were visible.

For several days we roamed far and wide, finding no caribou, but innumerable traces of the hunters who had preceded us. Here were lines of stones and turf, dummy hunters like those we ourselves had erected during the summer; there were the saucer-shaped pits from which the archers had launched their arrows, and, near them, small stones, resting on larger ones, to mark the places where caribou had fallen. The marksmanship had been unerring, the toll of victims immense, if one could rely on the number of signs we encountered within the radius of a few miles; but they were no more convincing than the bullet-holes of the enemy in a trooper's hat. Even the scrupulous Ikpuck liked to set up the signs in suitable places, a small stone for a small caribou and a larger stone for a bull; he would fool the coming generations, he said. But he was not enthusiastic enough to build stone caches for all the hypothetical meat, so that a critical traveller would certainly notice the disproportion between the two marks and temper his judgment accordingly.

• 225 Disappointed at the non-appearance of the caribou, my versatile "father" sought by other means to replenish our dwindling stock of meat. He visited the harbour, where I had noticed some bearded seals playing

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

in the open water near shore. It was not difficult to shoot them, but to bring them to land was an extremely hazardous enterprise, since a thin sheet of ice covered the water for a distance of a hundred yards out from the shore. Any dead seals that remained afloat, buoyed up by thick layers of blubber, drifted gently against its outer edge. Ikpuck crawled cautiously toward them, testing the ice in front of him with his hunting-knife; then, attaching a long line to a carcass, he retreated a few yards and dragged it out of the water. This was the most perilous task of all, and more than once the ice creaked ominously under the strain; but salt-water ice is less brittle than fresh-water, and he escaped with nothing worse than two badly frozen wrists. Out of six seals that floated he landed three, which provided enough blubber to last us a month, even if we kept the lamp burning five or six hours a day. He did not mention the freezing of his wrists, and we did not discover their condition until they turned completely black.

A lake near our camp yielded him other trophies. True trout were lacking, but salmon-trout that had migrated up from the sea earlier in the summer now began to spawn along its margin. He could see the male fish, a brilliant red at this season, swimming around little piles of boulders where the inconspicuous females deposited their eggs. They fled when his chisel struck the ice above them, but the male, and even

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

winter months; as soon as they left this place for the sealing-grounds they might sew no more until the sun returned at the end of January. The men brought in the pokes of blubber cached on Read Island six months before, and the carcasses of the caribou shot during the migration just ended; in idle moments they repaired their sealing weapons or helped their wives to scrape the caribou hides.

The monotony of this new life affected the children much more than the adults. Throughout the summer they had shared our hunting and fishing, packed their burdens like the rest of us, and played an active rôle in every enterprise. They had gained a status in those months far beyond their years. Now they were reduced to children again, helpless dependents whose principal duty was to carry messages from one hut to another. Their bows and arrows, which had secured us many a duck and ptarmigan, were useless now that the birds had flown, and their fishing-lines lay idle in the family dunnage-bags, buried away until another spring. Little wonder, then, that they chafed under the confinement and tedium of a sedentary life, where no new playmates, no dances, no visitors from other tribes, breathed fresh life into our humdrum circle. A strange irritability seemed to taint their merry, carefree natures, and they wept over trifles that a month before would have passed unheeded.

Icehouse told Jennie one morning to brush the snow

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

123 meaning of the flags and tinselled paper that covered the walls and tables of our hut. But when they opened their "stockings," filled to the brim with chocolate cakes, needles, thread, and enough cloth to make each of them a dress, their eyes nearly burst from their sockets and their joy pealed forth in uncontrollable laughter.

Guests are indispensable for a perfect Christmas, and ours, though unheralded, were none the less wel-
574 come. Two half-civilized Eskimos and their wives
437 from the hinterland of Hudson Bay, hearing that white men had settled in Dolphin and Union Strait, journeyed four hundred miles to visit us and to barter their furs for ammunition, tea, and tobacco. They arrived two days before Christmas, and left us the day following it to return to their country; but on Christmas evening they thanked us for our hospitality by holding a dance in the kitchen. The only drum we could muster was an aluminum frying-pan with a hard, penetrating note, which our visitors pounded nobly as they pranced round the room, chanting a monotonous refrain. Jennie and her companion thought the music rather strange, and seemed relieved when the concert ended. As for ourselves, while we greatly appreciated the goodwill of our guests, we kept the door wide open and expedited their retirement with a liberal present of tobacco.

225 After Christmas, Patsy and I returned to the Eski-

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

official welcome, and danced in front of him, interspersing their songs with impromptu speeches to express their delight at his visit. The Runner, who had the prerogative of dancing next, made a suitable reply, saying how glad he had been to accompany his "white brother" on this journey and to meet once more his old acquaintances of the Musk-ox land. The whole ceremony resembled the joyous reunion of long-separated friends. As he remarked to me afterward, when the gathering dispersed, "It is good to establish dancing-companions in every tribe, for then you are sure of a welcome wherever you travel."

The cheerfulness of the villagers amid their hardships aroused our admiration. On Victoria Island the Eskimos with whom I had wandered frequently fasted for twenty-four and even forty-eight hours. The experience was no novelty in their lives; they merely tightened their belts, trudged steadily forward a dozen or fifteen miles, and said smilingly, "If we sight no caribou today we will tomorrow; or, if not tomorrow, certainly the day after." It was summer then, and our tents were comfortable even without fires. But in this village the winter gales were raging, the temperature fluctuating between 25 and 45 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, and ill-luck had been trailing the natives for several weeks. The hunters had searched for seals in the fiercest blizzards until every man's face was scarred with frost-bites, but the number

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

mos at the Liston and Sutton Islands on a day when the calm weather had drawn every hunter out to the ice-field, even women and young boys. They were standing like pillars over their individual seal-holes, scarcely daring to raise their heads lest they should alarm the seals beneath. But one hunter, Big-Tooth, hailed us, and thinking that he might have harpooned a large bearded seal which he was unable to draw up alone, I sent Patsy ahead with the sled, and hastened to his assistance. As I drew near, however, he left the seal-hole and sauntered toward me.

"It's the white man," he called.

"Yes, Big-Tooth."

"I've had no luck with my sealing," he continued.

"Is that so?"

"Ikpuck has been very successful."

"That's good news."

"I'll search around a little longer before I go home."

"Very well. I'm going straight to the camp." With these words I moved away, but he called out again:

"By the way, have any of our eastern kinsmen arrived yet?"

"No, not yet," I answered, and moved on a few yards.

"By the way, I'll be going home soon."

"Oh, very well," I called without halting.

"By the way, if I catch a seal will you give me some cartridges for part of the meat?"

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

lifted the veil of secrecy a few inches the other raised it higher, lest silence should rob him of a share in the reward. In the end it was not their secretiveness that hampered our researches, but our ignorance of their ways of thought and their own inability to narrate a story from the ground upward; for they invariably began with the crisis, so to speak, and worked backward and forward, with many omissions and repetitions, on the tacit assumption that our minds moved in the same groove as theirs and that explanations were needless.

If the preceding winter had been unusually mild, this one was unusually stormy. Gales from east and west—the two prevailing quarters—swept the shelterless ice-field day after day until its covering of snow grew hard like a macadamized road. Then the wind blew narrow furrows along it, *sulci* with crests so sharp that they hurt the feet. Hunters who ventured out to seal could find no breathing-holes amid the driving snow, and with difficulty reached their homes again. The first gales passed unheeded. The people had fish and caribou meat stored outside their huts, and pokes of blubber for their lamps. Gathered inside the dance-house, they could laugh at the howling blizzards and while away the hours in song and gymnastics. But when their food was exhausted, when half their lamps had expired from want of oil, dance-songs

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

gave place to incantations, and shaman after shaman sent forth his spirit to seek the dread sea-goddess at the bottom of the ocean and force her to relent. Temporary lulls in the storms drove every hunter to the sealing-grounds; on calm days they left the settlement two or three hours before dawn and returned in the darkness. As the dogs dragged the booty into the passageways the children threw themselves on the seal carcasses and poured water into their mouths to please their spirits and induce other seals to rise to the hunters' harpoons. Dolphin and Union Strait was one of the richest sealing-grounds along the Arctic coast, and the natives with whom we camped escaped any dire privations this winter; but in Coronation Gulf, as we learned afterward, many Eskimos ate the sealskin covers of their bows, and some old people perished through the hardships they were compelled to endure.

The storms were responsible for other tragedies. A boy of about six years, the only son of a strange, priest-like individual whom we knew as "The Prophet," was blown from the roof of a snow-hut during a gale, breaking his thigh just above the knee. The father, aided by an elderly medicine-man, set the leg in short splints bound round with a caribou hide. As soon as I heard of the accident I offered to take the lad to our station, where we would care for him

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

Musk-ox land and restore him without delay, whole in body and untouched in heart. "Men are so foolish with women," she added, noting his tolerant smile.

Four of us, then, The Runner, Girling, Patsy, and myself, piled our belongings upon a sled and turned our faces eastward. Close to Locker Point, we reached a village of the Coppermine River natives, where signs of starvation confronted us on every side. The women, sheltered behind low walls of snow, were fishing for tom-cod to replace the seals their husbands could not catch; the lamps burned low in many of the huts, or were extinguished from lack of oil; and the hungry children gathered round our tent to beg for food. During the two days we stayed in their village we invited as many as we could to share our meals; but when they uncovered our sled in the darkness, broke into a box of hard biscuits, and emptied twenty-five pounds of rice into their mittens, we brushed the snow of their settlement from our shoes and resumed the interrupted march.

Our next stopping-place was a small settlement near the mouth of Tree River, a hundred miles farther east. The inhabitants turned out as usual to greet us, and after the first salutations, an elderly man, who appeared to be the leader of the band, invited us to enter his hut. There his daughter, a young woman about twenty years of age, was skilfully flensing a freshly killed seal. Her greasy clothes, dishevelled hair, gory arms, and

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

face besmirched with blood and blubber from the tit-bits she slipped into her mouth, made a somewhat unattractive picture to our European eyes, though the Eskimos thought it charmingly homelike. But as soon as she finished her task she washed with snow, dried her face and hands with a ptarmigan skin, braided her hair, and changed into a neat suit of brown caribou fur adorned with red and white insertion. In this new setting she shone with quite a different radiance; for her face, though almost circular, was so regular, and her complexion so fresh and clear, that even the blue tattoo lines with which all the Eskimo women in this country marred their faces only added piquancy to her charms. If Girling had consented to carry out his missionary duties we would certainly have christened her the "Boreal Venus."

These natives had been in close contact with Anderson's party during the summer and regarded all white men with the greatest respect. When they learned that we intended to stay with them for a few days they renovated an empty hut for our use and equipped it with a stone lamp, which the women supplied with oil and tended night and morning. They, too, like the people we had just left, had suffered from starvation for several weeks; but now their hunters were killing more seals, and as the days lengthened they looked confidently forward to a season of plenty. Their leader and his wife almost embarrassed us with hospitality.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

they had captured hardly sufficed to keep them alive. Now their strength was impaired by starvation, their huts cold from lack of oil in the lamps. One or two families, driven by hunger, had even eaten the dry sealskin cases of their bows. Perhaps it was the nearness of spring that buoyed up their courage, for none of them showed despondency or gloom, despite their pinched faces and empty cooking-pots. Indeed, they seemed more distressed by their apparent inhospitality, for several of our visitors apologized at being unable to offer us the usual presents of meat.

We stayed with them three days, and each morning the men left early for their hunting-grounds, although, half blinded by the snow-clouds, they could find few seal-holes and captured not a single seal. Our own supplies were running dangerously low; we had full rations for three days only, and the return journey to Bernard Harbour required at least a week. So we reloaded our sled and struck southward to the mainland, hoping to find game of some description as we skirted the coast.

Our departure marked the beginning of even worse weather, for the temperature dropped lower still, and the wind, which had blown in our faces throughout the eastward march, now swung round to smite us from the west. That first day's journey to the mainland tried us all severely, and though I perhaps suffered most—my health being far from good at this period—